



This project is funded
by the European Union

**This project is funded by the European Union
and implemented by the
United Nations Development Programme**

European Union - Confidence Building Measures Programme
Programul Uniunii Europene - Măsurile de Promovare a Încrederii
Программа Европейского союза - Меры по укреплению доверия



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

APPLICANT'S GUIDE

GRANTS COMPETITION

CROSS-RIVER BUSINESS COOPERATION PLATFORMS

UNDER THE EUROPEAN UNION - CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES PROGRAMME

DEAD-LINE FOR APPLICATIONS: 28TH OF AUGUST 2019

July 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	CONTEXT.....	3
II.	PROJECT SCOPE	3
III.	TIMEFRAME AND PROJECTS SIZE.....	4
IV.	TERMS AND CONDITIONS	4
V.	APPLICATION PROCEDURE	6
VI.	EVALUATION CRITERIA.....	8
VII.	SELECTION PROCEDURE.....	9
VIII.	PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS. MONITORING	9
ANNEX 1	APPLICATION FORM	Error! Bookmark not defined.
ANNEX 2	PROJECT PROPOSAL	Error! Bookmark not defined.
ANNEX 3	BUDGET TEMPLATE.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

I. CONTEXT

The EU Confidence-Building Measures Programme V (EU-CBM Programme), funded by EU and implemented by UNDP, aims to enhance confidence-building measures and cooperation between both banks of the Nistru river by generating new perspectives for the future while supporting common interests of population from both banks, and by answering to their emerging development needs. The EU-CBM Programme is a framework that involves civil society and business environment from both banks into development interventions, by promoting activities that enhance, regulate and intensify personal interactions, aiming to mainstream them. Through its component Economic Development and entrepreneurship, the EU-CBM Programme supports business efforts to create employment opportunities and offer better living conditions to the citizens of both banks of the Nistru river, by stimulating economic activities and enhancing cooperation. This component aims to enhance and consolidate economic relations, being focused on enabling new employment opportunities and improving livelihoods for women and men. Planned activities will help both banks to address existing problems with joint efforts, especially given that they share similar economic challenges and structural deficiencies. At the same time, efforts will be made to reduce the gap in economic growth between both banks.

II. PROJECT SCOPE

The EU-CBM programme is built on the achievements of previous interventions, including initiatives related to the economic development of both banks of the Nistru river. Among the soundest business development projects are cross-river business cooperation platforms.

Cooperation between business communities on both banks has been significantly strengthened within 8 platforms previously created. As a result, a diversified portfolio of business services was enabled and provided to more than 100 enterprises from both banks. Staff of both banks companies has attended capacity building activities to improve knowledge and acquire skills in export promotion, identification of new markets, brand development, product/service development, increase of productivity in agriculture through innovative technologies, sales improvement and creation of leads, other areas. Access of fruit producers has been facilitated on abroad and local markets allowing for new partnerships to be established with retailers for the delivery of more than 2'700 tonnes of fruits after participating with common stands at fairs in Romania and Belarus. To change perception of masses about healthy food and to popularize ecological products, experimental plots have been created as test beds for novel technologies, complemented by consultancy provided to whoever intended to embrace the ecological agriculture.

Two Tourism Information Centres were created in Chisinau and Tiraspol, allowing for a joint touristic offer to be developed and promoted at international fairs. Also, the first-ever *Catalogue of Hotels from Both Banks* has been produced allowing for incoming tourists to be better informed.

Cross-river marketing research service was developed to provide marketing research or data analysis for both banks' markets, products and customers' behaviour. Before, cross-river researches were not possible due to limited access and sensitivity of data to be collected in the Transnistria region.

Four interconnected Business Women Associations have been created on both banks to empower women in entrepreneurship especially in agriculture. Other 3 thematic agriculture associations were

created on both banks, putting together beekeepers, poultry farmers and wine growers, supporting exchange of knowhow and best practices with peer organizations from across the river and abroad.

Considering the achieved results, the current phase of the programme will allow new business cooperation partnerships to be established and/or to strengthen the existing ones. This shall be achieved through capacity building activities and a grants' scheme (at least 4 grants) provided to cross-river initiatives that promote economic cooperation aiming to solve core issues envisaging specific sectors of the economy on both banks. Among key activities to be supported will be the inclusion of left bank companies, associations, chamber of commerce and industries in right bank sectoral development, as well initiatives that promote joint exports of both banks' companies, through participation in international fairs and B2B events.

III. TIMEFRAME AND PROJECTS SIZE

Applications to be submitted under this call shall include activities to be implemented in a timeframe of 12 – 24 months after the grant agreement will be awarded.

Each of 4 (four) successful applications can rely on a grant component not exceeding 25,000 EUR per project. If budgets of first four proposed projects will be significantly below 25,000 EUR one additional application could be awarded, subject of funds availability. Own contributions are encouraged, being considered an advantage in the selection process.

IV. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

[A] General

All projects should strive to support an existing business platform, or establish a new one, applications being submitted by cross-river partnerships of at least 2 organisations (one organisation from each bank of the Nistru river). Under this competition organizations will be able to submit only one project proposal as main applicant, at the same time being allowed to participate as secondary partner in several projects.

There is considerable flexibility in identifying the actual needs and priorities of respective business areas, core requirement being for submitted project proposals to enhance economic growth, business development and cooperation.

Successful projects will have high impact on envisaged sectors of economy for both banks, solving core issues for doing business in respective areas and having a positive impact on a significant number of potential beneficiaries, especially on economic actors. Applicants should pay attention to engaging with local stakeholders and supporting their activities. They should also seek to reach out wider society including grass roots organizations, local governments and academia.

Activities encompassed in the project proposal will enable business people from both banks to cooperate and benefit from cross-river interaction being supported by members of the business platforms in areas of mutual interest.

The project proposal to be submitted should prove its long-term sustainability, by describing a consistent and logic set of actions with clearly defined operational scope, tasks and budgets. Interested applicants shall make sure that their platform will continue to work effectively after project closure date

by presenting a **detailed roadmap**, showing how this sustainability will be attained.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to consider following principles when defining their project proposals: confidence building, human rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability, inclusiveness, because those applications will have a significant advantage in the selection process.

The EU-CBM Programme is strongly committed to gender mainstreaming and UNDP, the implementing body, is a pioneer organization which pleads for gender balanced approach in all aspects of life, therefore under this call we strongly encourage organizations led by women to apply their project proposals. Also, one of the objectives is to ensure that at least 40% of business platforms' beneficiaries will be women.

[B] Only organizations fitting below criteria will be eligible

- Cross-river partnerships of at least two organizations from both banks will be eligible. Leading actor can submit one project proposal as main applicant, at the same time being allowed to participate as secondary partner in several projects.
- Registered non-profit or non-governmental organization (business associations, public associations, unions of producers, employers' associations, chambers of commerce, non-commercial partnerships, etc.);
- Organizations which will carry out activities in the area stipulated by the project proposal, being directly responsible for the development and management of the project, avoiding intermediaries for programmatic activities. At least one of the partners in the implementation of the project should have experience in carrying out activities in the TN region, as stipulated by the project proposal;
- Legal entities, which at the time of application do not have debts or arrears for taxes, fees and fines.

Non-eligibility criteria

- The applicant was found liable for serious professional or financial mismanagement, proven by such evidence as recognized by UNDP Moldova;
- Have a history of failing to comply with contractual obligations arising from previous arrangements with donor organizations;
- Is a for profit and/or a state-owned legal entity.

[C] Budget

- The project proposal shall include a budget estimate in US dollars (\$), with detailed information about each cost line, as per the template from Annex 3. Source of funding shall be explained per each cost line: [a] from the allocated grant, [b] own contribution, [c] other sources (any financial support granted by international organizations, private sector, others). **In kind contributions** are not actual costs and cannot be considered as co-financing from the partner for project implementation and will be indicated in the project description.
- Expenses for experts and personnel who will be involved in project implementation.
- Proposed budget and costs estimates will cover full duration of project implementation (12 – 24 months);
- Proposed budget and costs estimates will be realistic and will comply with the action plan described in the project proposal;

- Goods and/or services procured under this Programme shall be subject to zero VAT taxation (0% - as per the Government Decision) on the right bank and shall be exempted of any taxes on the left bank, being qualified as technical assistance.

Eligible expenses

- Expenses for consultants and service providers (including marketing and promotion materials);
- Expenses for trainings, events (meals, accommodation, information campaigns and awareness raising, copying, printing, interpretation and translation etc.), participation at national / international fairs and exhibitions;
- Logistic expenses (including rent of transport, gasoline, transportation for participants etc.);
- Expenses for purchase of equipment can only be included in the budget if they are necessary for the efficiency of project implementation. However, such expenses should be avoided. Expenses for the purchase of expendables and other materials required for the project;
- Administrative expenses should be minimized, for instance by rewarding supporting personnel for provided deliverables, instead of paying monthly wages;
- Other expenses which are necessary for efficient implementation of the project.

Ineligible expenses

- Expenses incurred before the contract has been signed (including expenses related to project submission) or activities already financially covered by another grant programme/ other persons providing financial support and/or those which already received funding from other sources;
- Individual sponsorship for participation at workshops, seminars, conferences or educational scholarship;
- Fines, penalties and exchange rate losses;
- Current costs of an organization which are not related to the project goals.

V. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Once the competition for the Cross-River Business Cooperation Platforms is launched, two induction seminars will be organized in Chisinau and Tiraspol, to acquaint interested organizations with the project concept, selection criteria, implementation modality and learn basic concepts of confidence building (peace building).

Two induction seminars will be organized in Chisinau and Tiraspol, to clarify potential questions related to the Cross-River Business Cooperation Platforms.

Interested organizations willing to attend the induction seminars shall send a confirmation message to the following address: olga.vrajmas@undp.org before 31st of July, 16.00 local time. The deadline for submitting project proposals is **28 of August 2019, 16.00 local time.**

Applicants for the Cross-River Business Cooperation Platforms Grants Competition shall submit the following set of documents in Romanian, Russian or English:

- A. Application form (Annex 1), project proposal (Annex 2) and budget covering costs estimates for the entire implementation period (12 – 24 months) (Annex 3), where sources of funding shall be specified per each cost line: [a] from the allocated grant, [b] own sources, [c] other sources (clearly stating supporting organization), if any. All procured goods and/or services under this project will

be subject to 0 VAT tax (0% - as per the Government Decision) on the right bank and shall be exempted of any taxes on the left bank, being qualified as technical assistance.

- B. Qualifications of the project team (CVs of team members using same template) including resumes of the project coordinator and involved staff of partner organizations.
- C. Registration certificate issued by the Agency of Public Services, for organizations from the right bank. Similar certificate for organizations registered on the left bank and a proof of existing bank account should be included (by both, main applicant and partner organization).
- D. Upon submission of the project proposal the applicant shall demonstrate that there are no financial debts (unpaid taxes and fines) to the public authorities.

Applications will be selected based on a thorough evaluation according to the established evaluation criteria process described in the chapter VI and awarded accordingly with a grant.

VI. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Criteria	Description	Score
[1] Impact and relevance of proposed project for the envisaged sector of the economy on both banks	<p>Solves core issues of the envisaged sectors of the economy on both banks.</p> <p>Number of business actors that potentially will benefit from the project deliverables.</p> <p>Uniqueness of proposed projects and activities. (20 points)</p> <p>Proposed activities are dealing with specific objectives of national strategies defined for the envisaged sectors. (20 points)</p> <p>Creates new services and development opportunities for the business communities from both banks. (10 points)</p>	50
[2] Expertise and experience in proposed business development areas	<p>Existing team of professionals and consultants with relevant backgrounds for proposed business development area. To be evaluated based on applicants' resumes for both: main applicant and partner organization from the opposite bank. (15 points)</p> <p>Portfolio of similar projects implemented by partner organizations in the last 5 years, with main focus on activities related to envisaged business development areas. (15 points)</p>	30
[3] Level of involvement of partner organization	<p>Maximum score will be cumulated if project duties will be shared equally by partner organizations. (10 points)</p> <p>Main applicant and partner organization shall be solely and fully responsible for the entire implementation process of the project. In case of delegated activities to third parts (that do not relate to the main partnership) a lower score will be allocated. (10 points)</p>	20
[4] Implementation logic and development modality	<p>There is a well-defined path for activities to be implemented with a clearly defined logic, where each next activity shall result from the deliverables of the previous one. (20 points)</p> <p>The project proposal has a well-defined strategy envisaging to achieve a clearly established scope(s) through the gradual implementation of project activities. (20 points)</p>	40
[5] Quality and sustainability of the proposed project	<p>Sustainability of proposed projects and related activities. (15 points)</p> <p>Quality and number of planned activities. Quality being the prime criteria. (15 points)</p>	30
[6] Budget relevance and financial reliability. Co-financing	<p>Justification and relevance of proposed expenses. Coherence of proposed costs estimations. Reliability of proposed shares of expenses per each activity compared to the general scope of the project. (10 points)</p> <p>Co-financing from partners' contribution. (10 points)</p> <p>Organization's contribution. (10 points)</p>	30
Total		200

Note: Project proposals can accumulate max. 200 points. Only projects that will pile a minimum of 140 points will be recommended for financing. Incomplete and/or hand-written project proposals (including annexes), as well as projects that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be admitted.

The deadline for submission of project proposals is 16.00 (local time), **28 August 2019**. Applications will be accepted only before the dead-line, printed on paper and shall be delivered to the below address (incomplete or handwritten proposals, including annexes will not qualify):

UNDP Moldova, 31 August 1989 St., 131, MD-2012, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
In attention of the Procurement Department

The project proposal shall be sealed in an envelope and marked as follows: EOI19/01949: Cross-River Business Cooperation Platforms.

VII. SELECTION PROCEDURE

Selection of project proposals commences upon termination of the submission procedure. Extension of the deadline could be considered, but it's not guaranteed, thus all applicants are encouraged to fit proposed deadlines. Selection will be based on principles of merit, transparency, equality and rational use of funds. Evaluation of project proposals includes two stages:

Stage I: Checking compliance of applications and eligibility of applicants. The selection committee will evaluate available expertise, experience of applicants, but also budget relevance and financial reliability. Based on Selection Committee decision only project proposals which comply with eligibility criteria and which will cumulate at least 140 points will be admitted to the second stage of the selection procedure.

Stage II: Steering Committee of the EU-CBM Programme will examine qualified applications in the 1st stage as per the evaluation criteria and will approve grants' award to project proposals with best scores.

VIII. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS. MONITORING

Once the selection procedure is over, the applicants will be informed whether their project proposals have been selected for funding. Grant agreements will be signed with main applicants of partnerships representing winning project proposals. Awarded grants will be disbursed in 3-5 tranches, depending on complexity of submitted projects.

First tranche will be disbursed in advance for the implementation of actions embedded in the inception phase of the project. Following tranches will be disbursed after previous deliverable will be provided, to be confirmed through financial and detailed narrative reports provided by benefiting organization (main applicant). All submitted reports will be endorsed by a representative of the EU-CBM Programme.

Beneficiaries of the programme will assume the responsibility to participate or to delegate a representative to attend trainings, roundtables and public events (forums, exhibitions) organized in the frame of EU-CBM Programme. Upon their request, beneficiaries will have access to business services and mentorship organized by EU-CBM, which will improve the quality of business management.

The last tranche (15-20% of the grant value) will be transferred upon finalization of the project, but not later than in the 24th month from the date of commencement of the project. Upon disbursement of the last tranche, the following conditions shall be valid:

- Committed activities and agreed deliverables (in-line with the grant agreement to be signed) will be fully provided, being seconded by required narrative and financial reports;
- The established partnership will prove its long-term sustainability, continuing to implement activities described in the roadmap (submitted in the initial phase of the project);
- All trainings and public events related to the business component, organized by EU-CBM Programme have been attended by benefiting organizations (main applicant and partner organization).

Upon finalization of the project, beneficiaries will assume responsibility for provided high quality deliverables and services, facilitating at the same time monitoring visits and tight cooperation with representatives of the EU-CBM Programme, EU Delegation, other relevant stakeholders (audit missions, media, etc.) when necessary.